



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 167

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

No. 163

House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. DEMINGS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 21, 2021.

I hereby appoint the Honorable VAL BUTLER DEMINGS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 10:50 a.m.

NICOLE GEE EULOGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, every American knows the image of George Washington crossing the Delaware, the fallen rifleman at Gettysburg, and the marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima. Our history is punctuated with moments of individual heroism and virtue so profound and moving that they live forever in the memories of our countrymen and the proud story of our country.

To these iconic images, history has now added another: that of a young marine sergeant in full combat gear cradling a helpless infant in her arms amidst the unfolding chaos and peril in the besieged Kabul Airport and proclaiming: "I love my job."

The entire story of the war in Afghanistan is told in this picture: the sacrifices borne by young Americans who volunteered to protect their country from international terrorism, the heroism of those who serve their country even when their country failed them, the idealism of a generation that tried to bring enlightened modernity to an afflicted society, and, most of all, the stark contrast between good and evil, tyranny and freedom, barbarity and justice, and brutality and mercy.

Above all others, this is the image that describes it all. It is given power and immortality by the spirit of the young woman in this photo, Marine Sergeant Nicole Gee. Through the ages to come, this picture will speak of the sacrifice of blood and treasure of 20 years of struggling and of the vision, hope, liberty, justice, and humanity that summoned patriots like Nicole Gee to leave their homes and families and place themselves in harm's way on the other side of the world. As Shakespeare put it: "This story shall the good man teach his son." Historians looking back on this age will find its story summarized in this single picture and illustrated in the life, dreams, and ultimate sacrifice of Nicole Gee.

They will note that her life ended just days after this photo was taken at the age of just 23 years. They will remember that this angelic young lady was cut down with 12 of her brothers and sisters by incarnate, insensate evil. They will ponder where that young life might have led.

That is an important question, and the answer is known to all who knew her. She could have done anything she wanted. She was married to her high

school sweetheart, 4.1 GPA at Oakmont High School, "one pretty badass marine," as her sister put it. She could have done anything she wanted, and what she wanted most was to serve her country and to serve humanity.

Who else but a guardian angel amidst the chaos and violence of those last days in Kabul could look beyond all that and look into the eyes of an infant and proclaim: "I love my job"?

Speaking of the fallen heroes of past wars, James Michener asked the haunting question: Where do we get such men?

Well, here is the answer: We get such men and women from little towns across America like Roseville, California. They leave their family and friends in pursuit of the highest virtues of which human beings are capable, and they do it because their country asks them and because it is noble.

I don't know how to offer condolences to Nicole's family, to her husband, Jarod; her father, Rick; her sister, Misty; and her family and friends. The loss they bear is beyond my comprehension. I can only offer my awe and gratitude that humanity has within itself a small band of brothers and sisters like Nicole Gee; for without them, America, that "last best hope of mankind on this Earth," would not be possible.

A few steps from here in the rotunda is a fresco called The Apotheosis of Washington. It depicts General Washington in uniform ascending to the heavens flanked by Victory and Freedom and surrounded by the essence and fruits of a free nation. And in that depiction, Washington beckons.

From little towns like Roseville, California, decent young men and women with promising futures like Nicole Gee have answered. I don't know how their families can bear it, but I do know that we owe them. Before her father left the stage at a community memorial, he had one request. He pleaded:

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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